



Sign in | Register for free

Site Search Search Local Business Listings

Sign in with Facebook

Search for keywords, people, locations, obituaries, Web ID and mor Go

Home News Business Sports Entertainment Living Interact Jobs Autos Real Estate Rentals Classified Ads Shop
Business Statewide Automotive News Ann Arbor Jackson & Lansing Mid-Michigan Metro Detroit West Michigan

Top Stories



Kwame Kilpatrick moves into \$372K home in Texas



Three things learned from recent presidential debate...



Stafford tosses four picks as Lions mauled by Bears...

Home > West Michigan Business > Shopping/restaurants

A HollyJolly Christmas kickoff event showcases downtown Grand Rapids retailers

Published: Wednesday, November 09, 2011, 6:57 AM Updated: Wednesday, November 09, 2011, 10:27 AM



By Chris Knape | The Grand Rapids Press Follow

Comment 0

15

1

Share Email Print

GRAND RAPIDS — Christmas is coming back to downtown in a bigger way than has been seen in years.

A diverse mix of more than 45 downtown retailers are banding together to deck their windows and lure holiday shopping dollars in what organizers hope will be an event that will reshape how people think of downtown as a retail destination.

The HollyJolly event kicks off Dec. 2 at the annual tree-lighting ceremony in front of the Grand Rapids Art Museum. After, dozens of stores will exhibit special window displays in a contest the public will help judge.

The window contest runs through Dec. 15, with the public and juried winners named the following day.

During the kickoff Friday and Saturday and throughout the event, retailers are offering special incentives, promotions, live music and food. Free trolleys will loop around the downtown district Friday and Saturday.

Shuttle buses on Saturday will connect downtown with businesses in the Uptown shopping districts, East Grand



Grand Rapids Press File Photo

The lighting of the downtown Christmas tree heralds the 2007 holiday season outside the Grand Rapids Art Museum. This year's lighting will be held Dec. 2.

Sponsored By:



Independent Bank



EARN DOUBLE\* UFLY REWARDS POINTS!

Win two roundtrip FREE\* tickets!

CLICK HERE TO ENROLL NOW!



\* VISIT SUNCOUNTRY.COM FOR RULES & RESTRICTIONS

More West Michigan Business

Most Comments Most Recent

West Michigan Business stories with the most comments in the last 7 days.

- 50 CEO compensation dwarfs what the rest of us make -- 243 to 1 in 2010, according to this analysis
48 Gov. Rick Snyder aims to reduce business tax credits in Michigan ... maybe (Rick Haglund column)
34 Unemployment insurance claims declined again last week nationwide, but Michigan had the largest increase
33 Christmas tree growers lament conservative outcry that halted federal marketing program
27 Bill Clinton's 46-step plan for creating jobs and fixing the economy

Rapids, Breton Village and AK Rikk's men's store in Cascade Township.

"We're really excited to offer something to people who have been coming downtown and people who have been discovering downtown after being here for ArtPrize and Restaurant Week," said Anne Marie Bessette, retail coordinator for the Downtown Development Authority. "I think people should be expecting something fun around the holiday time."

Last month, the DDA agreed to contribute up to \$12,500 to help fund the event. Retailers, outside sponsors and other groups also are kicking in to pay for marketing, lighting displays, trolleys and maps to help shoppers find their way.

The list of vendors signed on to participate ranges from traditional stores and boutiques to an eclectic mix of galleries, salons and resale shops.

"People thought there would be 15 people participating and the fact that we have 45 retailers who are already on board who are non-restaurants surprises many people who don't realize how much retail we have to offer downtown," Bessette said.

Event organizer Tommy Allen, who helped hatch the idea for HollyJolly with fellow marketing guru Tina Derusha, said he is working to integrate the city's creative community into the event by helping match retailers with designers and artists interested in helping decorate a window for the competition.

"I've focused on making this event about how can we bring our creative people into the mix and how could this turn into a career opportunity for them," said Allen, of Levitation Staging.

Robin Day is hoping the event helps kick-start business for his soon-to-open tobacco shop, Grand River Cigar, 131 S. Division Ave.

"We're hoping that it will draw down a lot of customers into the downtown area who will want to take a ride down South Division Avenue and to see some of the businesses down here," he said.

Derusha, of Spotlight616, has high hopes the event will become a holiday tradition.

"We hope to reignite the imagination and spark, that special holiday something that happens when independent retail is brought to the table," she said.

E-mail Chris Knape: [cknape@grpress.com](mailto:cknape@grpress.com) and follow him on Twitter at [twitter.com/Kcorner](https://twitter.com/Kcorner)

Related topics: [Christmas](#)


### Downtown stores participating in Holly Jolly Event

303 Gallery  
 6.25 Paper Studio  
 ArtPrize  
 Boutique Emmanuel  
 Chai Boutique  
 Craft-Revival (Jewelry)  
 Douglas J. Aveda Institute  
 Ecouter Salon  
 Family & Pediatric Eye Care  
 Gerald R. Ford Museum  
 Gina's Boutique  
 Goodwill Industries  
 Grand Central Market and Deli  
 Grand Rapids Art Museum  
 Grand River Cigar  
 Groskopf's  
 Hairacy Hairstyling  
 Haworth & Interphase Interiors  
 Heartside Community Artists  
 Kitchen Sinc  
 Lee & Birch  
 Lia Rose  
 Minty Keen  
 Old World Olive Press  
 One Girl's Treasure  
 Plaza Essentials  
 Premier  
 Reynolds & Sons  
 Sallie's Boutique Salon  
 Sanctuary Folk Art  
 Schuler Books Downtown  
 Sofia Bella Couture  
 Store presented by Avenue for the Arts  
 Superior Watch Repairs  
 Tanáz Hair Boutique  
 The Dirty Hippie  
 The Market presented by Avenue for the Arts  
 Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts  
 Urban Obsession Day Spa  
 VanderMoere Fine Art  
 Van Hoecks Shoes  
 Vertigo Music  
 Vue Design  
 West Coast Coffee  
 Wolverine Company Store

### Most Active Users

[What's this?](#)

Users with the most **MLive.com** comments in the last 7 days

- 161  [PumpedUp4Kids](#)
- 151  [summa cum laude](#)
- 149  [hellzapoppin](#)
- 124  [B'wana](#)
- 116  [dmbierlein](#)

### Connect with MLive.com

[What's this?](#)

[All Facebook & Twitter accounts >>](#)

### Sponsored Links



From Our Advertisers